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The United States Agency for International Development

## Office of PVC - Ocean Freight Reimbursement

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### \*\* Overview \*\*

*The OFR Program is the oldest on-going PVO support program. Recipients ship a wide variety of goods overseas for use in privately funded development and humanitarian assistance programs.*

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, Section 123(b) authorized the creation of the program and, as amended, allows USAID to subsidize registered U.S. PVOs in their ocean freight transportation costs.

### \*\* Program Purpose and Objectives \*\*

The OFR Program is unique because it offers subsidies to PVOs to ship commodities overseas for use in privately funded development and humanitarian assistance programs. It is also unique because it allows small and newly registered PVOs to participate in a PVC grant process that is highly competitive, yet less complex.

## **\*\* Program Description \*\***

The OFR Program provides small competitive grants to over 50 U.S. PVOs each year. Funds are used to reimburse the PVO's costs to transport donated commodities, such as medical supplies, agricultural equipment, educational supplies, and building equipment, to developing countries.

The OFR Program helps USAID expand its pool of developing partners by reaching out to small and/or newly registered PVOs and by providing grants to many first-time applicants. About 20 percent of the 1997 grantees were new to the program. While USAID reimburses the costs of ocean freight, participating PVOs are responsible for associated costs, such as commodity acquisition, warehousing, insurance, local transportation, and distribution. The Program leverages resources many times the size of the USAID funding. The overall private-public match of OFR activities averages 42 to 1; i.e., the FY '99 budget of \$2.8 million mobilized more than \$128 million in private resources, mainly donated or purchased goods and supplies and volunteer time.

## **\*\* Relationship to PVC's Strategic Plan \*\***

Because smaller organizations tend to rely on volunteers for their ocean freight activities, the OFR Program indirectly expands the size of a PVO's volunteer base. The level of organizational sophistication required to attain the reimbursement, in itself, assures that the PVO will make administrative improvements. The OFR Program encourages smaller organizations to participate in the grant process, thereby strengthening the partnership between USAID and the U.S. PVO community. By its nature, the program makes a PVO establish partnerships with local NGOs and mobilize volunteers for the delivery of goods.

## **\*\* Eligibility \*\***

Applicants must:

- be a U.S. PVO registered with USAID's Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation;
- be in compliance with current legislation governing the privateness test which requires PVOs to receive at least 20 percent of their total annual financial support for international programs from non-U.S. government sources;
- have staff or consignees in-country to ensure proper pick-up and distribution of commodities;
- provide Duty-Free Status Certification with the application for each country to which commodities will be shipped.

**\*\* What's New and Different \*\*****Fiscal Year 2001**

This year the Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation (PVC) will implement a two-year worldwide OFR Program. A single application will cover both FY 2000 and FY 2001. Separate applications for each fiscal year are not required.

The Department of State will collaborate with PVC in offering separate transportation access to transport goods to the NIS. Therefore the OFR Program will not consider or review requests for the NIS in this 2-year cycle. Our collaboration with the Department of State offers a separate mechanism to transport goods to the NIS. The Department of State's Office of the Special Advisor to the President and the Secretary of State on Assistance to the NIS manages a program that provides humanitarian transportation assistance to the NIS for qualified PVOs.

PVOs interested in pursuing the NIS only program should correspond with Counterpart International concerning the eligibility requirements, instructions and application forms. All questions should be addressed to Counterpart International, 1200 18th Street, NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20036. Attn: Kimberly Brown. Counterpart may also be reached by phone at (202) 296-9676 or by fax at (202) 296-9679.

**\*\* Key Program Statistics \*\*****Fiscal Year 2000****WORLDWIDE PROGRAM**

Program Funding Level: \$2.8 million  
Number of Proposals: 73, totaling \$14 million  
Number of Recipients: 73, originally requesting \$14 million  
Number of New Awards: 61, totaling \$5.6 million

## \*\* Success Story \*\*

In the spring of 1997, [Samaritan's Purse](#) delivered \$500,000 worth of medical equipment to the State Hospital in Sarajevo, Bosnia. The donation, which included beds, a new X-ray machine, a ventilator, surgical supplies, a compression unit, and a heart and respiration monitoring system, made it possible for the hospital to reopen its intensive care unit which had been looted and destroyed during the war. The Director of the hospital was quoted as saying that "this event for us is historical. For the first time since the aggression, one department of our hospital looks like a usual medical department. This donation will benefit all our patients who need emergency action to survive."

In FY 1997, [Mercy Corps](#) shipped 8,287 pounds of assorted vegetable seeds to Tajikistan (including corn, beans, peas, squash, tomatoes, peppers, onions, turnips, rutabaga, beets, cabbages, and carrots as well as flower seeds). The donation enabled many families throughout Tajikistan to live on produce harvested from these seeds.

In addition, the seed shipment enhanced Mercy Corps partnerships with its NGO colleagues. Vegetable and flower seeds were provided to Save the Children/UK. Flower seeds were distributed to the Woman and Society Association and Parastor in Khojand. In addition, vegetable seeds were given to families with several children, as well as families who had lost their primary breadwinner, in Oyanda. Seeds were distributed to Save the Children/US for 10 schools in Western Khatlon to support a Food-for-Work School Garden Project. Vegetable seeds were also given to ORA International to be planted in school plots and harvested to feed a number of students in boarding schools throughout Tajikistan.

## \*\* Contact Person \*\*

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## \*\* RFA \*\*

### Request for Application for [FY 2002](#)

Issue Date: August 31, 2001  
 Closing Date: November 16, 2001

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